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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 001646

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2016

TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR SW

SUBJECT: SWEDEN'S NEW PRIME MINISTER, FREDRIK REINFELDT

REF: A. STOCKHOLM 952

¶B. STOCKHOLM 1501

Classified By: Polcouns Casey Christensen, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (u) Fredrik Reinfeldt became Sweden's Prime Minister October 6, following the victory of a four-party center-right coalition in September parliamentary elections. Reinfeldt's Moderate party led the coalition; the Moderate party alone won over 26 percent of the total vote. Reinfeldt became the leader of the Moderates in October 2003; under his tenure, the party climbed steadily in the polls. In September 2006 the Moderate party achieved its best result in any election since 1928.

¶2. (u) Reinfeldt, 41, is a career politician. He comes from a middle-class background and worked part-time during high-school and college, but has not held a regular job outside of politics. He joined the Moderate Party's Youth League when he was 18 years old. He was an Arctic Ranger during his national military service, and graduated as the number one cadet at the Umea military cadet school. While at Stockholm University, from 1984 to 1989 he led the "Non-socialist Opposition '68" party. He graduated from Stockholm University with a B.S. degree in Economics in 1990.

¶3. (u) He was elected to Parliament in 1991, when he was 26 years old, and became leader of the Moderate Youth League in ¶1992. Following the defeat of the Moderate-led coalition government in 1994, Reinfeldt openly criticized Moderate Party leader and outgoing Prime Minister Carl Bildt. This led to a rebuke from Bildt and a period of being left out in the cold by party leadership. Reinfeldt was accepted back, however, and was chosen to chair Parliament's Justice Committee in ¶2001. He was elected Moderate Party leader in 2003, in the wake of the party's poor showing in the 2002 parliamentary elections. Reinfeldt's selection of Bildt to be his Foreign Minister was taken as a sign that the rift between them is now completely in the past.

¶4. (u) Reinfeldt grew up in a series of middle-class neighborhoods around Stockholm. He has two younger brothers. Reinfeldt is married to Filippa Reinfeldt, who sits on the city council in Taby, the modestly upscale suburb of Stockholm where they have their home. They are the parents of two boys, Gustav 13, and Erik, 11, and a daughter, Ebba, 6.

¶5. (c) Reinfeldt is very organized and self-controlled. He is known for keeping his composure under pressure. He is said to drink very little alcohol. He speaks excellent English. He has visited the United States on several occasions, including as an observer of each of the past three U.S. presidential elections. He has attended the Democratic Party's national convention as an observer.

¶6. (c) During the Ambassador's call on him in June (ref A), Reinfeldt discussed his views on the relationship of religion to politics (in Sweden, he said, they do not mix), and his

intent to resist the efforts of "new liberals" to tear down the welfare state. He campaigned on the promise to improve rather than replace the welfare state, by giving better value for the money and better results. In his declaration of policy for the new government (ref B), he described initiatives to reduce various government payments to people of working age who do not work, and provide incentives for job creation.

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